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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000414

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: MONUC INVESTIGATION ASSIGNS BLAME TO BOTH SIDES
FOR BAS-CONGO VIOLENCE

REF: A. KINSHASA 134
[1](#)B. KINSHASA 291

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: A MONUC investigation into Bas-Congo's January 31-February 1 fighting between security forces and the separatist sect Bundu dia Kongo (BDK) assigns responsibility to both sides for the violence and estimates 105 died. MONUC found that BDK has demonstrated a strong propensity for violence, criminal activity, and manipulation of children. The Congolese military (FARDC) and police were blamed for harassment and excessive use of force against civilians in the name of providing "security." The inquiry warned that violence could easily return and urged the GDRC adequately to equip and train police forces to handle similar situations in the future. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) A special MONUC-led inquiry team drafted a report examining January 31-February 1 clashes in western Bas-Congo province between the police, the military and the political-religious movement Bundu dia Kongo (ref A). Post has obtained an advance copy of the report, not yet made public, which characterized the BDK as a violent group whose actions often lead to murders and other violent crimes. The inquiry accused Congolese security officials of indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force -- including summary executions -- against civilians. The MONUC team, drawn from its Human Rights, Child Protection, and Political Affairs Divisions, conducted more than 150 interviews with Congolese officials, hospital and NGO personnel, and local leaders from February 5-6 in the four Bas-Congo cities where most of the violence occurred.

[1](#)3. (C) The report stated that although BDK is not an armed group in the classic sense of the term, the movement has shown a strong propensity for violence and criminal acts. It recommended the group be closely monitored by GDRC authorities, who should engage BDK leaders in a political dialogue to avoid future acts of violence. Investigators found that several children, all believed to be associated with the BDK, were killed or injured in the fighting. They said they suspected these minors had been "manipulated" by the BDK, and called on its spiritual leader Ne Muanda Nsemi to ensure that children were not being indoctrinated or otherwise used for activities that may expose them to danger.

[1](#)4. (C) FARDC and police forces were accused of using excessive force and conducting numerous summary executions. The report charged that security forces had menaced, extorted and stolen from local populations after fighting subsided under the pretext of searching for possible BDK members and establishing security. It called on judicial authorities to

identify and bring to justice those responsible for such acts, including BDK members who violated the law.

¶15. (C) The inquiry established that at least 105 people died, including six police and four soldiers, with more than 100 were injured. (Note: MONUC officials had claimed in the wake of the fighting that 135 were killed; the GDRC officially declared 87 died. End note.) The report blamed poor training and equipping of police and military units, in addition to excessive use of force, for the number of deaths. It concluded the security situation in Bas-Congo remains tense and that violence could return. Investigators recommended that GDRC officials provide necessary training to the police in crowd control and non-lethal use of force. It also urged better training and discipline -- in addition to adequate pay and food -- for soldiers serving at the Kitona army base outside Muanda.

¶16. (C) The MONUC report attempts to clarify some of the more controversial (and confusing) events that occurred during the fighting. In Muanda, where some of the heaviest fighting took place, investigators learned that FARDC troops burned down a BDK church February 1 after discovering one of their colleagues had been killed by BDK sympathizers. The inquiry found that the soldiers had chased BDK members, armed with batons and machetes, to the church, where the FARDC troops attacked them with hand grenades. Six people, including a pregnant woman, were shot or burned alive in the incident. MONUC officials said that none of the military's attacks were premeditated, despite contrary claims by BDK supporters. It did establish, however, that the BDK had a premeditated plan to lay siege to Muanda.

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¶17. (C) In the city of Boma, MONUC reported that FARDC troops on February 1 fired upon BDK members who were apparently engaged in prayer, shooting some in the back. FARDC officials told investigators they believed the praying was in preparation for an imminent attack on security forces, an act in which the BDK has engaged during previous encounters. A total of 25 BDK members were killed in the incident. Investigators concluded, though, that BDK supporters had committed murder, including the apparently unprovoked killing of a police officer, and stolen private vehicles throughout the day in Boma.

¶18. (C) MONUC's report is largely consistent with other accounts of the fighting from local media sources and Post reporting (ref B). A report prepared by Bas-Congo's then-Governor Jacques Mbadu, which Post has also obtained, generally blamed the BDK for provoking and initiating the violence, but also accused members of the military and police of firing their weapons despite orders to the contrary. Mbadu's report, which fixed the death toll at 87, also recognized that security forces, especially the police, are not adequately trained to deal with violent demonstrations in a non-lethal manner. His investigation, however, did not mention any of the more controversial actions, such as the church incident in Muanda, committed by the FARDC.

¶19. (C) Other inquiries into the Bas-Congo events are expected to produce reports in the coming weeks. A special commission of the National Assembly has completed its preliminary investigation and is currently preparing its report. The international NGO Human Rights Watch has also conducted numerous interviews with Bas-Congo authorities and civilians and plans to issue its findings in the near future.

¶10. (C) Comment: The MONUC report seems to be a balanced and fair depiction of the January-February events in Bas-Congo, although many of the details of what occurred -- and the final death toll -- may never be known. Its conclusions may help put to rest some of the wilder allegations of abuses by the FARDC while laying out evidence of the BDK's involvement in the violence. End comment.

